

LUTTERWORTH RURAL DISTRICT COUNCIL

A N N U A L R E P O R T

of the

MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH

for the Year 1943

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Mr. Chairman and Gentlemen,

I beg to present herewith the Annual Report on the Health of your District for the year 1943. It has been kept brief in view of the circumstances of the times.

<u>STATISTICS</u>						<u>1943</u>	<u>1942</u>
Area (in acres)	...	...	...	...	...	46,701	
Estimated (civil) population	....	...	..			11,300	11,430
Births, legitimate	M.	113	F.	91	Total	204	182
illegitimate	M.	6	F.	9	"	15	6
<u>Totals:-</u>		<u>119</u>		<u>100</u>		<u>219</u>	<u>188</u>
Birth Rate	...	...	...	...	...	19.3	16.4
" " (for England & Wales)				...	...	16.5	15.8
Stillbirths	...	...	...	5	(all legitimate)		
Deaths	...	...	M.76	F.85	<u>Total</u>	161	124
Crude Death Rate	...	...	...	...	...	14.2	10.8
Factor for Comparative Death Rate - not available. (Non-civilian deaths are excluded)							
Death Rate for England & Wales				...	...	12.1	11.6
Death of Infants under one year of age (one illegitimate)						6	8
Infant Mortality Rate per 1,000 Births					...	41	42
Infant Mortality Rate for England & Wales					...	49	49
+++++							

Causes of Death

The principal causes of death were: heart disease, 48; pneumonia and bronchitis, 11; cancer, 16; kidney disease, 8; influenza, 8; intra-cranial vascular lesions ("stroke"), 6.

Comments on Statistics

The birth rate for 1943 jumped up from 16.4 to 19.3; the death rate rose from 10.8 to 14.2, a substantial increase; but the infant mortality was a trifle lower, 41 as against 42.

In a district such as Lutterworth with only a small population statistics are more reliable if averaged for several years. If we compare the average of the four war years with that of the four pre-war years we find as follows:

	<u>Pre-War</u> <u>1936-39</u>	<u>War</u> <u>1940-43</u>
Birth Rate	14.3	16.1
Ditto, England & Wales	14.9	15.3
Death Rate	13.0	13.7
Ditto           "       "	12.0	12.3
Infant Mortality	42	47
Ditto           "       "	55	53

From this comparison we see that in Lutterworth, as in England and Wales, there has been an increase during the war in both the birth rate and death rate; but as regards the infant mortality this has gone up slightly in Lutterworth, but in England & Wales it has, very surprisingly, actually fallen during the war years. But even the increased figure in the Lutterworth R.D. is still below the figure for England & Wales.

When we consider that we are in the fifth year of the greatest war the world has ever known, and when we think of the conditions prevailing in almost every other country in Europe, we have indeed much to be thankful for that our vital statistics have been so little affected, and in certain aspects have even been improved.

#### Notification of Infectious Disease

Scarlet Fever	15
Diphtheria	1
Typhoid Fever	0
Whooping Cough	13
Measles	53
Pneumonia	12
Puerperal Pyrexia	2

#### Diphtheria Immunisation

Immunisation of the child population continues to take up much of the time of your M.O.H., and the work will increase rather than get less, for at the age of five, when children begin to attend school, it is necessary that those who were immunised as infants should be again immunised if the protection against diphtheria is to be maintained. This is a point which, not un-naturally, parents do not altogether appreciate, so it will be necessary to circularise them again, when a child reaches school age, to remind them of the necessity. It will be possible, however, to do this through the school, all teachers, in my experience, being ready to co-operate. In a district such as Lutterworth, comprising so many widely scattered villages, the work entailed, in proportion to the number of children immunised, is necessarily greater than in a compact urban district, as such a large mileage has to be covered. It not infrequently happens in the smaller villages that an immunisation session has to be held for only three or four children or even less.

During the year your M.O.H. has held 80 sessions at 23 centres in the Lutterworth R.D., in addition to 105 sessions at 21 centres in the Blaby R.D.

The Lutterworth sessions were held as follows:-



# DIPHTHERIA IMMUNISATION ANNUAL STATEMENT 1943

Centre	Sessions held	D.I's completed		3rd "boosting" injection
		Under 5	Over 5	
Lutterworth I.M.C.	5	44	10	
Broughton Astley	8	18	21	
Dunton Bassett	5	14	17	
Bitteswell	4	4	5	
Willoughby Waterless	2	7	7	
Arnesby	4	10	2	
Shearsby	3	6	1	
Bruntingthorpe	3	7	5	
Walton by Kimcote	3	11	3	
North Kilworth	3	6	-	
South Kilworth	3	8	8	
Swinford	3	11	4	
Shawell	1	3	1	
Walcote	1	6	3	
Ashby Magna	4	5	3	
Gilmorton	5	14	15	
Ullesthorpe	4	8	2	
Claybrooke	2	17	4	
Frolesworth	4	6	5	
Leire	4	3	-	1
Lutterworth Grammar Sch.	3	-	14	2
Lutterworth Modern Sch.	3	-	13	
Lutterworth Junior Sch.	3	4	38	
23	80	212	181	3
Immunised "privately" by County & City M.O.		19	2	-
		231	183	3

As the appointment of your M.O.H. is a joint one with the Blaby R.D.C. it may be of interest if the corresponding figures for the Blaby District are also given. They are:

Children under 5 ... 536. Over 5 ... 361. Total - 897.

## Total No. of Children now Immunised

During the 3 years, 1941-43, during which this work has been carried on, the total number of children known to have been immunised is as follows:

	<u>Lutterworth</u>	<u>Blaby</u>
Under 5	705	2026
Over 5	<u>1444</u>	<u>3324</u>
	2149	5350

## Proportion of Children Immunised

The following are the figures as returned to the Ministry of Health as at the end of 1943:

	<u>Lutterworth</u>
Under 5 years	55%
Over 5 "	70%

### Amount of Work entailed by Immunisation

Although the majority of children have now been immunised fresh babies are always coming along and the work entailed by immunisation is not materially lessened. The ground has to be covered and immunisation sessions held at each centre every few months, though of course the numbers attending at each session is substantially lower than it used to be. But as the children who were done in infancy reach school age they will need a further "boosting" injection to maintain the protection which tends to wear out with the lapse of time.

As has been pointed out in former reports, the work will continue to take up a large amount of time. During the past year a total of 185 sessions were held at 44 different centres in the two districts, and the car mileage entailed amounted to 1218 miles (Lutterworth, 543; Blaby, 676).

Only one case of diphtheria was notified during the year and this had not been immunised.

### Scabies

There is reason to think that this troublesome affection of the skin is becoming less prevalent in both Lutterworth and Blaby Districts.

At the Bathing Centre established two years ago at the Lutterworth Public Assistance Institution only 5 fresh cases were treated during the year as compared with 61 in the previous year. Assuming that this reduction is a true indication of the reduction in the prevalence of the complaint, such a small number of cases is highly satisfactory.

I wish again to express thanks to the Master and Matron at the Institution for their kind co-operation in this matter,

### Laboratory Work.

The following examinations were made at the County Council's laboratory:-

Milk examinations (bacteriological)	...	...	...	...	106
Swabs for diphtheria	...	...	...	...	16
Sewage and water analyses	...	...	...	...	0
Sputa for T.B.	...	...	...	...	21
Miscellaneous	...	...	...	...	3
					<hr/> 146 <hr/>

### HOUSING

The primary need in every community (after food and clothing) is homes for the people, i.e. dwelling houses. This takes precedence over all other communal needs. The building of dwelling houses has necessarily been suspended since the outbreak of war, with the result that a great shortage of houses now exists, and this will be much intensified when, the war being over, demobilisation occurs.

Also existing houses, the condition of which, even before the war, was too often most unsatisfactory, are now in a still worse condition owing to the difficulty of executing necessary repairs.

Fortunately there is reason to believe that the Government is fully alive to the situation, and steps are already being taken to overtake the shortage by preparing plans, building sites, etc. But although active work may be begun as soon as the war is over, it is obvious that



lack of ordinary building materials, and the disorganisation of the building trade due to the war, is likely to cause serious delay unless special measures are taken. Among the measures proposed is the use of other building materials to supplement brick, e.g. steel and concrete. There has been much said recently about "pre-fabricated" houses, manufactured in factories by mass production methods, and then rapidly assembled and put together on the actual site. The life of such emergency houses is only intended to be of limited duration, and as a safeguard against their being kept in existence after they have served their purpose it is proposed that they should only be erected by local authorities who should retain ownership of them. As a temporary expedient to prevent, or at least reduce, the heart-breaking delay in the provision of homes for demobilised men which occurred after the last war, there is much to be said for these pre-fabricated houses, and there is no reason why they should not be healthy and comfortable to live in. As a different class of labour will be utilised in their construction they should not interfere with the provision of brick houses as rapidly as circumstances permit.

#### Report of Central Housing Advisory Committee

As regards Rural Housing, the Government have just published (in May, 1944) the Third Report of the Rural Housing Sub-Committee of the Central Council Advisory Committee. This Sub-Committee, under the Chairmanship of Sir Arthur Hobhouse, has been studying the problem of rural housing for about two years, and this report is a very valuable contribution to its solution. It is too exhaustive for more than a brief summary of its recommendations so far as they affect rural district councils. It is pointed out that after the war the administration of the Housing Acts will be in the fore-front of local government services, and the Report urges the necessity of embarking on a long-term housing program. The first necessity is that there shall be an adequate staff, both technical and clerical, and there will also be a need for more sanitary inspectors. In order that the woman's point of view may be adequately represented, it is recommended that R.D.C. should co-opt one or more suitable women on to their Housing Committees, as they are empowered to do by Sec.85, Local Government Act, 1933. Another essential condition is that there should be higher and more uniform standards in assessing housing conditions.

It is recommended that in each county there should be set up a Joint Committee consisting of representatives from all the R.D.C. in the county and of the County Council. These Joint Committees would not have statutory functions but be for consultation and discussion; and it is considered desirable that they should be set up at once before the end of the war. It is believed that such committees could do much towards raising the standard of housing throughout a county.

An essential step preliminary to any long-term housing program is a comprehensive survey of housing conditions in every rural district and it is suggested that this should be begun at once. It is to be feared that there would be practical difficulties in doing this in many districts owing to shortage of staff.

As regards reconditioning, i.e. the thorough bringing up-to-date of houses that are worth saving, R.D.C. are urged not to hesitate about making use of their powers to make grants to owners who are willing to undertake this work of reconditioning (which goes far beyond ordinary repairs), half of such grants being contributed by the National Exchequer. Councils which neglect to take advantage of their power to make grants are acquiescing in the continuation of unsatisfactory conditions. The Government is recommended to increase the maximum amount of the grant at present permissible to compensate for the increase in building costs.

In conclusion it may safely be said that if the recommendations in this report were whole-heartedly carried out, a very great improvement in rural housing conditions, which at present leave so much to be desired, would be effected in the course of a very few years.



## WATER SUPPLY

After housing one of the primary sanitary need of every community is an ample supply of good water. It is much to be deplored that so many of the rural villages throughout the country are still without such a supply. This is one of the great blots on our sanitary administration which will certainly have to be dealt with after the war if we are to live up to the high ideals as regards our duty to our fellow men which have been so freely enunciated during the war. Admittedly the difficulties, both technical and financial, are great in the case of many villages, but difficulties exist to be overcome, and public opinion is now becoming awakened to the urgency of this question.

The Government has announced its intention of taking the matter up in earnest after the war and has brought forward a Bill - the Rural Water Supplies and Sewage Bill - in which substantial help is promised. Clause 3 extends the duty of every local authority, including rural district councils, to provide a piped supply of water to every rural locality in their district in which there are houses or schools, though they will not be required to do anything which is not practicable at a reasonable cost. Introducing the Bill in the House of Commons on 3rd May, 1944, the Minister of Health said that the measure was for the conservation and better utilisation of the country's water supplies, the further extension of public water supplies and sewerage in rural localities and for the better management of rivers. He said that at present about 30% of the rural population of England & Wales had not got a piped supply, either into their houses or within easy reach. This represented some 2,000,000 people. A new feature of the Bill was that the costs of providing water and sewerage schemes should no longer fall on the parish alone but be shared with the National tax-payer, the County rate-payer and the District rate-payer. The contribution of the National Exchequer would be fixed at a maximum of £15,000,000 for water supplies and sewerage schemes together for England & Wales. He concluded by expressing the hope that within a measurable time there would be a piped water supply in very nearly all sizable groups of houses. Moreover, the Board of Agriculture proposed to extend financial assistance for water for agricultural purposes so that isolated farm houses and cottages would also be included. The Minister of Health, speaking on the second reading, said that the Bill encouraged local authorities to draw up schemes knowing that they would not be frustrated by lack of means. Plans for mains and sewers could be prepared now, and when the time came to do the work the Government would come to the aid of rural authorities who found the cost beyond what the rate-payers and consumers could reasonably be expected to bear. The Bill provided far more generous provision for water supply than had ever been thought of before.

### The position in Lutterworth R.D.

In the Lutterworth R.D., out of 29 parishes, there are only six which have a public water supply, viz. Lutterworth, Willoughby Waterleas, Ullesthorpe, Claybrook Magna, Claybrook Parva, and part of Bitteswell. All other villages have to rely upon wells, most of them shallow and liable to pollution, and many of them liable to dry up in periods of exceptional drought.

Now that the Government are coming to the assistance of rural authorities, as outlined above, Lutterworth R.D. has an opportunity of providing water supplies for all villages for which it is responsible such as has never occurred before.

## SEWAGE DISPOSAL

Next in importance after Housing and Water Supply is sewage disposal. Problems of water supply and sewage disposal are largely inter-dependent. It is impossible to adopt the "water-carriage" system and substitute water closets for the most insanitary and highly objectionable pail closets or privies until a piped supply of water is available; and the provision of a piped supply of water makes the provision of a proper sewerage system more urgent.



In Lutterworth R.D. the only parishes which have public sewage disposal systems are: Lutterworth, N. Kilworth and S. Kilworth; and in the two last-named several new sewers are necessary before they can be considered as satisfactory. In all the rest of the District sewage discharges into open ditches or streams, either direct or after passing, without treatment, through catchpits, with consequent risk of nuisance or contamination of water-courses.

#### Special Report by Council's Surveyor

A special report on water supplies and sewage disposal in the Lutterworth R.D., dated June 1943, has been prepared and presented to the Council by Mr. Geo. Berridge, the Council's Surveyor, from which the above brief statement of facts has been taken. In this report Mr. Berridge tentatively makes the following recommendations as to the villages which should be first dealt with after the war, though he rightly recommends that further and fuller inquiry should be made before a final decision is arrived at. (a) Water Supply: Bitteswell (completion of), Broughton Astley, Bruntingthorpe, Peatling Magna, Frolesworth, Ashby Parva & Leire. (b) Sewage Disposal: Bitteswell, Broughton Astley, Dunton Bassett, Ullesthorpe, Claybrook Parva, Arnesby and Ashby Parva.

From what has been said above as to the urgency of the matter, it will be realised that the villages selected for priority must only be regarded as a beginning of the work to be done. The remainder of the villages will still remain to be dealt with at the earliest possible time and as part of the task of national reconstruction.

#### PUBLIC SCAVENGING

Yet another important sanitary need of every community is some system of public scavenging by which house refuse may be removed away from dwellings and so disposed of as not to cause any nuisance. In the Lutterworth R.D., out of 29 parishes, there are 16 from which house refuse is removed by the Council by direct labour, and 6 from which it is removed by contractors under contract with the Council; but in the remaining 7 no provision has been made. These are Bittesby, S. Kilworth, Kimcote & Walton, Knaptoft, Shearsby, Shawell and Westrill & Stanmore. It is true that most of these villages have only very small populations, but two - South Kilworth and Kimcote & Walton - have each got populations of about 400. The provision of arrangements for public scavenging should be undertaken as soon as ever circumstances permit of it.

#### MILK SUPPLY

Although substantial improvements have been effected in the Nation's milk supply in past years, it cannot be denied that the conditions under which milk is produced still leave a great deal to be desired. In many places the facilities for the production of clean and safe milk are quite inadequate, e.g., the structure of cow-sheds, drainage, lighting, water supply, etc. The last-named is perhaps the most important. Under the circumstances existing in many dairy farms it is really too much to expect that clean milk can be produced.

#### Food & Drugs (Milk & Dairies) Bill

Admittedly the difficulties to be overcome are great, and the Government has come to the conclusion that the most effective way of achieving substantial improvement in the quality of the milk supply of the country is by a drastic and radical change in procedure. They have therefore introduced the above Bill, often referred to as the Clean Milk Bill, under which the duty of safeguarding the Nation's milk supply will be largely taken from the local authorities and be transferred to the Board of Agriculture. It is hoped that thereby procedure will be simplified and unified. The Bill is very controversial and there has been considerable opposition both in and out of Parliament, so further comment had better be deferred. There is a good deal to be said both for and against the new proposals.

## SANITARY CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE AREA

These remain much the same as in previous years. The following much abbreviated particulars are taken from the report of Mr. G. Berridge, Surveyor and Sanitary Inspector:

### (1) Water

Samples taken for analysis	...	...	...	...	...	...	0
No. of wells closed	...	...	...	...	...	...	2
" " " cleaned	...	...	...	...	...	...	2
<u>Steps taken to improve water supply</u>	...	...	...	...	...	...	None

### (2) Drainage & Sewerage

Cesspools abolished	...	...	...	...	...	...	4
Number remaining on 31st December	...	...	...	...	...	...	161

### (3) Closet Accommodation

Privies: Total number in District on 31st December	...	...	...	...	...	...	60
Pail Closets: " " " " " "	...	...	...	...	...	...	1430
W.C's : " " " " " "	...	...	...	...	...	...	1395
Privies and Pail Closets converted to W.C's	...	...	...	...	...	...	11

### (4) Public Scavenging

This has already been dealt with.

### (5) Sanitary Inspection

Complaints received	...	...	...	...	...	...	94
Inspections made	...	...	...	...	...	...	588
Revisits	...	...	...	...	...	...	192
Notices (preliminary) issued - Housing and Others	...	...	...	...	...	...	34
Notices (statutory) issued	...	...	...	...	...	...	0

### (6) Shops

Sanitary conveniences. Defects remedied	...	...	...	...	...	...	3
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### (7) Inspection of Food

Cow keepers. No. on Register	...	...	...	...	...	...	263
No. of Inspections	...	...	...	...	...	...	197
Contraventions remedied	...	...	...	...	...	...	51

Purveyors of Milk (Other than cow keepers)

No. on Register	...	...	...	...	...	...	18
No. of Inspections	...	...	...	...	...	...	41
Contraventions remedied	...	...	...	...	...	...	5

Milk sampling:

Samples taken for bacteriological examination	...	...	...	...	...	...	29
Satisfactory	...	...	...	...	...	...	21
Unsatisfactory	...	...	...	...	...	...	8



## HOUSING

### 1. Inspection of Dwelling Houses

(1) (a) Total no. of dwelling houses inspected for defects (under Public Health or Housing Acts)	137
(b) No. of Inspections made for purpose	192
(2) (a) No. of houses (included under sub-head (1) above) inspected and recorded under Housing Consol. Reg's	33
(b) No. of inspections for purpose	69
(3) No. found to be <b>unfit for</b> habitation	--
(4) No. found to be in all respects reasonably fit	18
2. No. of defective houses rendered fit by informal action	38
3. Action under statutory powers	nil
4. Housing Act, 1936 (Part IV) Overcrowding	
No. of new cases of overcrowding reported during year	6
"    " persons concerned	38

In conclusion I would say that whilst the war continues to dominate all other considerations normal sanitary work must necessarily be affected; indeed much of it has to stand over. Happily the skies are brightening as regard the war outlook, and more and more we are beginning to think about and make plans for the period of reconstruction which will follow the successful termination of the war.

(Signed) C. KILLICK MILLARD, M.D., D.Sc. (Public Health)

The Gilroes,  
Leicester.

19th June 1944.

